handkerchief - owned by Lincoln

Drawer 29

Clothing, Accessories

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Curios and Relics

Clothing Accessories

Handkerchief Owned by Lincoln

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the

Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

71.2009.085.04905

Decatur Review
Ills.

Monday, February 24, 1941.

LINCOLN HANDKERCHIEF

Lincoln Presented This Handkerchief To Friend in '61

Mrs. Anna Onstott of Mansfield, O., well known Lincoln collector and enthusiast, holds a handkerchief in the picture which Abraham Lincoln gave to a neighbor before he left Springfield in February, 1861, for Washington.

It is 19 by 26 inches in size, of hand blocked red silk with a border of white and yellow stripes. In the center is a design of oak leaves in yellow and two shades of red. Two sides have selvage edges and two are hand hemmed, possibly by Mrs. Lincoln herself.

Mrs. Onstott, who comes to Decatur frequently, is the widow of the late Rev. Daniel Onstott, a Methodist minister in Ohio. His father was Thomas Onstott, cousin of Henry Onstott whose cooper shop is the first building as one enters New Salem village where Lincoln once lived, the reconstructed village near Springfield, on the Sangamon.

Lincoln studied in the Onstott cooper shop on long winter evenings by the light of the fireplace. The cooper shop is the only original building in New Salem. It was moved from the village on the bluff to nearby Petersburg, then moved back when the village was being restored.

Mrs. Onstott showed the handkerchief to Carl Sandberg, famed Lincoln student and author, at the dedication of the Henry Horner college of Lincolniana in the Centennial building on Lincoln's birthday. In "Lincoln's Prairie Years" Sandberg quoted, vol. 2, chapter 103, page 78, "In many jury arguments and in Lincoln's Missouri Compromise speech in Springfield, Ill., he wiped the sweat from his face on a red silk handkerchief."

Mrs. Onstott passed some time in Decatur in the fall of 1939 and exhibited an oil portrait of Lincoln at the Art Institute. She was gathering information about a chair made from timbers of Lincoln's first home in Illinois, near Decatur, in 1830, which will be restored on the original site, purchased for a State Park.

Methodist Advocate Mar 6/41
41 th Edition.

Mrs. Anna Onstott, with the red silk handkerchief from her rich group of Lincolniana displayed, February 12, at Springfield, Ill. Mrs. Onstott was present to attend the dedication of the late Governor Horner's Lincoln collection. Governor Dwight H. Green, Lieutenant-Governor Hugh W. Cross, Historical Librarian Oliver R. Barrett and Carl Sandburg were speakers at Centennial Hall

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84 Prospect Street,
Franklin, New Hampshire,
December 6, 1945

Lincoln National Life Foundation
Fort Wayne 1
Indiana

Gentlemen:

I noticed your name in the December, 1945 issue of "Hobbies" and am especially interested in item (K) as I have the following in my possession which may be of interest to you:

a piece of a handkerchief originally belonging to President Lincoln. This measures approximately 6" x 10", is hemmed on two sides and torn, with rough edges on two sides; the material is a printed silk of an ecru base, with red and black design printed on it in a leaf and stem pattern. There is an all-around border of about 1/2" wide of a black base, and a little repeated figure in the ecru and the red shades.

I came into possession of this from the effects of an old lady for whom I was conservator, and found it put away in a locked box with other mementoes. Attached to it, in pencil, is the following notation:

> "Piece of Pres. Lincoln's hdkf. Gove. Jewell of Conn. who was a member of his cabinet, gave it to his niece, who gave it to Jennie."

You ask that a price be mentioned in first letter, but that is impossible in this instance as I have nothing to gauge the value of this memento. I should have to leave that to your own experience and integrity. I should be much pleased to hear from you as to whether this is of interest to you, and enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope for your reply.

Very truly yours,

Olive B. Cogswell

(Mrs. C.W.) Olive B. Cogswell
Conservator for
Alice M. Hawkes
New Hampton, N.H.

Enclosure(1)
obc/h